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RUEHOS/AMCONSUL LAGOS 0815
RHMFISS/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE
RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHINGTON DC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ABUJA 000268

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/W, INR/AA
DEPT PASS TO USAID/AFR ATWOOD, USTR - AGAMA
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TAGS: [ECON](#) [EAID](#) [EAGR](#) [ECOWAS](#) [PGOV](#) [GV](#) [NI](#)

SUBJECT: ECOWAS: AMBASSADOR'S MEETING WITH PRESIDENT CHAMBAS

Classified By: Political Counselor Walter N. S. Pflaumer for reasons 1.

14. (b & d).

11. (SBU) SUMMARY: On February 5, the Ambassador, in her capacity as U.S. permanent representative, met with Economic Community of West African States' (ECOWAS) President Mohamed Ibn Chambas to discuss a range of issues, including ECOWAS' next steps on the Guinea coup, the status of USAID projects in the region, and other matters. Chambas described ECOWAS as working closely with the African Union (AU) on responding to events in Guinea; the two organizations will be co-chairing the first session of the international contact group on Guinea on February 16. He added that the unanimity shown by Guinea's stakeholders directly after the coup was breaking down, and the need for a comprehensive strategy for a smooth transition to democracy was more necessary than ever. Chambas gave an update on the Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Program (CAADP) and efforts to attract more foreign investment to the region's agriculture sector. Ambassador briefed Chambas on the \$25 million Food Security Program and how this would also assist regional agricultural issues. END SUMMARY.

12. (SBU) On February 5, the Ambassador met with ECOWAS President Mohamed Ibn Chambas to discuss the latest on the coup in Guinea, as well as USAID's projects in member states. After expressing his congratulations on the U.S. election and his desire to work closely with Secretary Clinton, Chambas said that ECOWAS was working with the AU on Guinea to try and ensure a smooth and speedy transition to democracy, having established an international contact group consisting of ECOWAS, the AU, the UN, the permanent members of the UN Security Council, the European Union, the International Organization of la Francophonie, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the Mano River Union, and the World Bank, with interest also shown by Japan. The inauguration of the contact group will be February 16 in Conakry, and Chambas assured the Ambassador that this Guinea contact group (GCG) would not interfere with or overshadow the work being done by the Mano River Union contact group, as the Union would only have an observer status in the new GCG as to not distract it

from its work. Once the GCG became more mature, then it will be incorporated into the Mano River Union group. Right now, however, the ECOWAS President said it was necessary to keep the contact groups separate. The contact group will meet every two months, and focus on ensuring a smooth, non-violent transition to an elected government. He described a general breakdown of the tacit support that had followed the coup from those wanting a positive change for Guinea, but now civil society and labor unions especially expressed concern about the direction in which the National Council for Democracy and Development was heading, having restricted civil liberties, neglected to engage vital national stakeholders, and thus far not issued any type of statement of their vision and purpose.

13. (SBU) Ambassador raised the CAADP and the Global Food Security Response (GFSR). Chambas said the French Government is trying to help augment West African agriculture within the context of the CAADP. ECOWAS expects to hold a donor roundtable meeting in October, bringing together the French government, USAID, the World Bank, and other interested parties, emphasizing the key role the private sector can play in investment and financing. He described an "ambitious, bold" goal of attracting investment to West Africa from Middle Eastern countries in the commercially viable agricultural export and food security sectors. Subsequent to mentioning the \$25 million the USG is giving Nigeria through the GFSR, the Ambassador gave Chambas a list of USG initiatives under the GSFR, which Chambas said he would read carefully with an eye to finding ways to expand USG/ECOWAS

ABUJA 00000268 002 OF 002

cooperation.

14. (C) COMMENT: The meeting with Chambas was brief but cordial and informative. ECOWAS continues to be engaged and forward-thinking in its stance on Guinea, putting to good use experience hard-won from dealing with the crises that have rocked the region, where the unfortunate truth is that coups are not yet a thing of the past. END COMMENT.

15. (U) This cable was coordinated with Consulate Lagos.
SANDERS